

WENATCHEE, WASH.
WORLD

Approved For Release 2004/10/28 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000100450006-0

E - 22,650

S - 22,762

JUN 2 1970

Father awaits word from Cambodia

Eastsider still missing

By RAY SCHIRICK

The last letter that John D. Morrow, East Wenatchee, received from his son sounded much like any letter that a father might get from a son in Vietnam.

But this letter was different in two ways.

First, the son, Michael Morrow, 24, was not in Vietnam as a combatant. In fact, he is a conscientious objector, who went there as a correspondent for Dispatch News Service, a news agency that he helped found and which distributed the Pulitzer prize-winning story on the My Lai massacre.

Second, it was the last letter home before Morrow was reported missing in the Cambodian-South Vietnamese area. He is one of 12 correspondents reported missing in Cambodia in recent weeks.

The plight of Morrow, who disappeared May 7, and the others, has attracted world-wide efforts to locate them.

No definite word has yet been received, despite pleas to United Nations Secretary-General U Thant and the deposed Cambodian head of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, reported in exile in Peking.

Most likely, they are considered prisoners of the Viet Cong.

However, the father here says he doesn't know for sure.

"One of three groups has Mike," says the elder Morrow, "the Viet Cong, the Cambodians or the C.I.A. (U.S. Counter-Intelligence Agency)."

Why C.I.A.?

It would mean, in effect, the South Vietnamese, said the father.

Young Morrow (he'll be 25 next July 24) has been a controversial figure during a rocket-like career that has had ups and downs.

Like some other missing U.S. journalists in Vietnam, he has been critical of our military involvement in Indochina.



MICHAEL MORROW
Missing Correspondent

In his own country, he has refused to report for induction into the armed forces.

When he returned to North America last fall to marry, he came not to East Wenatchee, but to Vancouver, B.C. There he married the Vietnamese girl he had met at University of Taipei on the island of Formosa.

He didn't come into the United States, because of a possible federal indictment for evading the draft.

The elder Morrow is critical of U.S. Selective Service's handling of his son's case.

"To bring a man out of the war zone, where he is performing a service for his country, isn't consistent with the best interests of the United States," said the father.

"I paid \$1,200 to fly him home in 1968 for a physical examination for Selective Service. U.S. authorities in Saigon refused his request for a physical examination there.

"The same day that Mike passed the physical, he was classified 1-A. His request for

conscientious objector status was refused."

One reason for Mike's becoming a conscientious objector was his feeling that the U.S. shouldn't be fighting in Indochina.

"He felt it was an illegal and immoral war," said his father.

After refusing to report for induction, Mike returned to Saigon, informing the local draft board here of his war zone address.

Why did Mike Morrow go to the Far East in the first place?

It was perhaps a combination of interest in newspapering and the Far East.

Newspapering may be in Mike's blood, says his father. His grandfather, a former state senator from King County, at one time was editor of the Seattle Argus. He also had the first newspaper in Ballard. Later he had a ranch and also was a job printer.

Mike's father wasn't a newspaperman.

The family moved here in connection with the father's job, representing English Electric Co., Ltd., which supplied electrical equipment for Grant County Public Utility District's Priest Rapids Dam.

The family had lived in Renton before coming to East Wenatchee.

Mike, after graduating from Eastmont High School (he was co-salutatorian and vice president of the senior class), went to Dartmouth College, majoring in Far Eastern affairs.

"The Far East was 'cracking' then," said his father. "The Orient apparently was becoming a very important factor in future considerations of world affairs. Mike was interested."

His final quarter at Dartmouth, Mike was excused to go to the Orient to learn conversational Chinese.

At the University of Taipei on Formosa, his future wife, Christine, a sociology major, was his tutor in Chinese.



CHRISTINE MORROW
His Wife

tutored her in English.

Christine was born in Hanoi in North Vietnam. Her family migrated south to Saigon when the country became divided.

Mike's wife has become a U.S. citizen. She was sponsored by the elder Morrow here.

Today she lives in Saigon.

She has been trying to gain information about Mike's whereabouts without much success.

She talks regularly by phone with Mike's parents here.

Recently, a South Vietnamese army unit reported finding Mike's press credentials. They were found in a plastic bag containing enemy documents, in a house where three enemy soldiers were killed in a gun battle on May 14, the South Vietnamese said.

Has the Morrow family thought of going to the war zone?

A brother, Peter, "speaks a little of going over there," said John Morrow. Peter, who speaks Chinese, graduates from the University of Washington

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